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**For Immediate Release:**

**UNEMPLOYMENT RATE 6.1%**

**(HELENA)** --- Montana's unemployment rate decreased by 0.2 points to 6.1% in September. The national rate decreased by 0.3% to 7.8%.

"Montana's unemployment rate continued its downward trend this month with strong job gains of 1,100 jobs," said Labor Commissioner Keith Kelly. "Over the last year, the number of unemployed people has dropped by 11% with many more Montanans back at work."

Both Montana and the U.S. unemployment rates made significant movements downward in September, echoing the declines at this time last year. Montana's employment growth rate over the last year remains at 1.7%, above its long-term average of 1.2% since the series started in 1976. At the U.S. level, employment has grown by 2% in the last year, compared to a 1.3% average annual growth rate using the same time period.

Montana's total employment increased by 1,130 jobs on a seasonally adjusted basis. Total employment includes both payroll workers, plus agricultural and self-employed workers. Payroll employment estimates indicated an increase of 600 jobs, with a gain of 1,200 jobs in the private sector and a decline of 600 government jobs. Job gains were greatest in the Professional and Business Services industry and in Construction. Preliminary estimates indicate that Construction has been adding jobs since the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2011.

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) increased by 0.6% in September, marking the second straight month where spiking gasoline prices have caused notable price increases in the CPI-U. Gasoline prices rose 7% in September following a 9% rise last month. The food index increased marginally by 0.1%. The increase in the all items less food and energy index, referred to as core inflation, remained relatively steady at 0.1% for the third straight month.

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*\*\* Unemployment figures are seasonally-adjusted. Seasonally-adjusted numbers remove the effects of events that follow a more or less regular month-to-month pattern each year. These adjustments make nonseasonal patterns easier to identify. The margin of error for the unemployment rate is plus or minus 0.8 percentage points at the 90 percent confidence level. All questions relating to the*

*calculation of unemployment rates should be directed to the Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Research and Analysis Bureau at 1-800-541-3904.*

*The October 2012 Labor Situation Report will be released on Tuesday, November 20.*

**\*\*\*\*\* INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET \*\*\*\*\***



Visit our website at [www.ourfactsyourfuture.org](http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org) for additional information and analysis, including answers to questions about the unemployment rate, industry employment levels, and annual employment data for Montana's Indian Reservations. **Health Care is a growing industry and in need of new workers. Find out more in this month's Economy at a Glance article.** County labor force information can be found by using this link:

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